UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1854
20 March 1995

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Bosnian Government forces launch major offensive north-east of Tuzla; Bosnian Serbs shell town in retaliation; Special Representative Akashi says Bosnia and Herzegovina cease-fire is disintegrating.

+ Special Representative Khan expresses shock at death of 24 prisoners by asphyxiation in Kigali police cell; calls on Government to improve conditions in Rwanda's prisons.

+ Fourth World Conference on Women must achieve permanent transformations in policies, attitudes and behaviour, Secretary-General tells Advisory Group.

+ Member States owe United Nations $2.9 billion as of 15 March; $1.2 billion owed to regular budget and $1.7 billion to peace-keeping.

+ UNICEF Executive Board to consider programme recommendations for 30 countries at second regular session.

+ Acting Chairman says Preparatory Committee for United Nations Fiftieth Anniversary must soon conclude organization of list of speakers for General Assembly Commemorative Meeting.

* * *

Bosnian Government forces this morning launched an offensive north-east of Tuzla involving up to 2,000 soldiers, according to a United Nations spokesman. He described it as the most serious breach of the Bosnian cease-fire to date. In retaliation, Bosnian Serb forces shelled Tuzla and its airbase, hitting a Government barracks and causing some 50 casualties there.

The spokesman said Special Representative Yasushi Akashi had met today with Bosnian Vice-President Ejup Ganic, at Mr. Ganic's request. The Special Representative took the opportunity to discuss what he viewed as the disintegrating cease-fire in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Meanwhile in Croatia, a United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) patrol yesterday came under fire from Croatian Army positions in Sector South. One Canadian peace-keeper was wounded in the incident. The UNPROFOR patrol had been on its way to inspect a new observation post following Croatian troop movements in the area.

* * *

The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Rwanda, Shahryar Khan, has expressed shock and concern at the death by asphyxiation of 24 prisoners in a police cell in Kigali yesterday. He deplored the inhuman conditions to which they had been subjected, and called on the Government of Rwanda to alleviate the suffering of over 24,000 inmates in the country's overcrowded prisons. He also assured the Government that the United Nations would provide immediate assistance for the improvement of conditions in the prisons, and for the revival of the judicial process in Rwanda.

Special Representative Khan noted that the officials concerned in the tragedy had been arrested for criminal negligence, and that the Government had given assurances that such an incident would not be repeated. He urged the Government and people of Rwanda to continue to ensure complete transparency in the judicial process and to allow for due process of law to be established.

In a separate development, the Government has apologized for recent radio broadcasts which were hostile to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). It also pledged that there would be no more of those broadcasts.

* * *

The Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September, must achieve permanent transformations in policies, attitudes and behaviour, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In remarks to the Advisory Group on the Conference at Headquarters today, he said that would require not just agreement on the draft platform, but a lasting commitment to its strategic vision.

The Secretary-General stressed that the other global conferences organized by the United Nations also produced gains for women. All of the great global concerns -- the environment, human rights, population, social development -- directly affected their situation. The conceptual and political gains made at each conference must be integrated in coherent plans of action.

* * *

As of 15 March, Member States owed the United Nations a total of $2.9 billion, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount, $1.2 billion was for assessments for the regular budget and $1.7 billion was for peace-keeping operations.

(more)

The United States -- the largest debtor -- owed $527 million to the regular budget, and $514 million to peace-keeping. The Russian Federation owed $63 million to the regular budget and $554 million to peace-keeping.

* * *

The Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) today began its second regular session of 1995 at Headquarters. During the four-day session, it will consider programme recommendations for some 30 countries, with expenditures totaling $507 million in general resources and $776 million in supplementary funds.

The Executive Board will also discuss a wide range of topics, from follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to the initial response to the recommendations of the recent management review of UNICEF.

* * *

The Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations has been continuing its consideration of the list of speakers for the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly, which will be held from 22 to 24 October 1995. Acting Committee Chairman Fredrik Wilhelm Breitenstein said on Friday that organization of the list must be concluded as soon as possible.

According to the Acting Chairman, there were three options to be considered. Under the first option, a Member State would be drawn from among the entire General Assembly membership, and the list would continue alphabetically, as in the case of General Assembly seating. The second option would have Members draw lots for the numbers 1 through 6 -- the numbers referring to the six meetings of the session -- which would designate the meeting at which the State would speak. The final option would involve a first-come, first-served basis, where Member States could line up to submit in writing their preferred choices for dates and position.

* *** *

UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1855
21 March 1995

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Bosnian Government forces launch offensives against Bosnian Serbs in four areas; both sides release prisoners of war and civilian detainees in Sarajevo.

+ In a message on International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Secretary-General says tolerance is needed to assure security and social development.

+ Secretary-General to send envoy to Phnom Penh to discuss continuation of United Nations human rights presence in Cambodia.

+ United Nations launches inter-agency appeal for $183 million to fund humanitarian activities in Iraq.

+ UNHCR urges Turkey to show restraint in military activities in northern Iraq; voices concern for safety of 4,500 Kurdish refugees living in border areas.

+ Ministers from 121 countries issue Rome Statement on Forestry, seeking urgent implementation of UNCED decisions on management and conservation of world's forests.

+ Human Rights Committee begins fifty-third session by approving agenda and electing officers.

+ Assembly of International Seabed Authority concludes second part of first session in Kingston; fails to reach consensus on constitution of 36-member Council.

+ UNEP to host training programme on environmental law and policy in Nairobi from 27 March to 13 April.

* * *

Bosnian Government forces yesterday launched four separate offensives against the Bosnian Serbs, according to a United Nations spokesman. There

For information media—not an official record

were engagements of various durations on the confrontation line north-west of Travnik, in the hills north of Tuzla, on high ground east of Tuzla, and in the Posavina corridor.

The spokesman said the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) regarded yesterday's military activities as "a body-blow to the cessation of hostilities agreement, but not necessarily a death-blow".

However, there was some encouraging news from Sarajevo, where the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Serbs each exchanged 12 prisoners of war and two civilian detainees yesterday. The release of the civilian detainees followed an agreement last week between Special Representative Yasushi Akashi and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic. The Bosnian Serbs also freed a Russian United Nations military observer who had been held for a few days, and were expected to free a detained interpreter tomorrow.

* * *

Racial tolerance is fundamental to achieving the goals of the United Nations Charter, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a message on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, he said tolerance was vital to assuring international security, human rights, and social and economic development.

The Secretary-General noted that while great progress had been made -- apartheid had been eliminated and there was a greater awareness of the evil of discrimination -- much remained to be done. The United Nations offered a medium of communication between cultures, and a resource for Member States to study each other's strategies for accommodating diversity.

* * *

The Secretary-General is to send an envoy to Cambodia to discuss the Cambodian Government's desire that the United Nations close its human rights office in Phnom Penh, according to a spokesman for the Organization. The Secretary-General discussed the matter with Second Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen of Cambodia at a meeting yesterday, but did not agree to close the office.

In a statement issued today, the Cambodian Ministry of Information expressed appreciation for the work carried out by the United Nations office. It said the Government had only proposed a "non-resident role" for the office, and was willing to discuss the matter further.

* * *

The United Nations today launched a consolidated inter-agency appeal for $183 million to fund humanitarian activities in Iraq. The appeal covers the period from 1 April 1995 through March 1996.

(more)

The money will pay for 81 United Nations guards who continue to protect United Nations and non-governmental organization personnel in Iraq, and for a range of health, food-aid and education programmes.

* * *

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today urged Turkey to show restraint in its military activities in northern Iraq. The UNHCR expressed deep concern for the safety of some 4,500 Kurdish refugees from Turkey living in areas close to the border between the two countries.

The UNHCR said it had received unconfirmed reports that at least two villages near the town of Zakho had been surrounded and subjected to house-to-house searches. Those reports spoke of hundreds of arrests.

* * *

Forestry ministers from 121 countries have agreed on the "Rome Statement on Forestry", asking for urgent implementation of decisions taken at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. After a two-day meeting hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, the ministers affirmed their determination to achieve the Rio de Janeiro Summit's objectives in the shortest time possible. UNCED called for the protection, sustainable management and conservation of the world's forests.

The Rome Statement on Forestry emphasizes the need to develop national plans which address economic and social causes of deforestation. It also emphasizes the need to continue to develop and apply criteria for the sustainable management of forests. The Statement stresses the importance of enhancing international cooperation, including mobilization of financial resources, for the benefit of developing countries. It further calls on the international community to rapidly advance the dialogue on trade in forest products and to assess the role of voluntary certification in promoting sustainable forest management.

* * *

The Human Rights Committee yesterday began its fifty-third session by approving its agenda and electing its officers. Francisco José Aguilar Urbina, expert from Costa Rica, was elected Chairman, while Tamas Ban, of Hungary, and Omran El-Shafei, of Egypt, were elected Vice-Chairmen. Elections of a third Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur were deferred to a subsequent meeting.

Opening the meeting on behalf of the Secretary-General, Helga Klein of the Centre for Human Rights noted that the General Assembly had urged treaty bodies to monitor the enjoyment by women of their human rights. The Assembly had also urged those bodies to recommend that States parties submit gender-specific information. The Committee on the Rights of the Child had given particular attention to the rights of the girl-child, she said.

* * *

(more)

The Assembly of the International Seabed Authority has concluded the second part of its first session in Kingston, Jamacia. In his report to the Assembly, President Hasjim Djalal (Indonesia) reiterated his formula for the allocation of seats in the Council -- the executive organ of the Authority -- taking into account the need for proportionality and the need to maintain a balance between developing and developed countries in that body.

The President's report stated that there had not been enough time to reach a consensus and constitute the 36-member Council. Informal consultations on how members would be nominated to the five different categories of membership in the Council had dominated the work of the three-week session, which began on 27 February. Since the Council was not formed, the Assembly was unable to continue with other tasks, including the election of a secretary-general of the Authority, the election of the 15-member Finance Committee, and the monitoring of the activities of the registered pioneer investors in deep seabed mining.

* * *

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will host a training programme on environmental law and policy at its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, from 27 March to 13 April. The training programme is being organized in collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

The training programme will focus on strengthening capacity-building in areas concerning national legislation for environmental management, including implementation of global and regional conventions. It will also cover topics such as legal aspects of environment and trade, management of human settlements and land use, and industrial compliance and enforcement. Thirty-two individuals from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Central and Eastern Europe will participate.

* *** *

UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1856
22 March 1995

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council President expresses concern about deteriorating political situation and reports of ethnic killings in Burundi; calls on all parties to work for national reconciliation and stability.

+ Government offensives in north-east Bosnia and Herzegovina decrease in intensity; three Pakistani UNPROFOR personnel killed in road accident in Croatia.

+ Security Council sets 12 July as date for election to fill impending vacancy on International Court of Justice.

+ Multinational Force in Haiti finalizes plans for transition to UNMIH on 31 March.

+ Argentina tells Human Rights Committee pardons given to members of former military junta did not erase their crimes, but shortened their sentences.

+ Legal Subcommittee of Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to hold thirty-fourth session in Vienna from 27 March to 13 April.

* * *

The Security Council today expressed concern about recent serious developments in Burundi. In remarks to correspondents, Council President Li Zhaoxing (China) said that the political situation in the country had deteriorated, and that there had been reports of ethnic killings there. He called on all parties concerned to stop the killings and to work for national reconciliation and political and social stability.

Also today, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General Chinmaya Gharekhan briefed the Council on the death of 24 prisoners by asphyxiation at a jail in Rwanda on Sunday. Rwanda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations

(more)

For information media—not an official record

informed the Council that financial difficulties had led to overcrowding in the country's prisons.

* * *

The Bosnian Government's military offensives in north-east Bosnia and Herzegovina decreased in intensity today, although fighting continued north of Tuzla, according to a United Nations spokesman. He noted that heavy snow may have been a factor in that development, and that the Bosnian Government had severely limited the freedom of movement of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the area.

Bosnian Serb harrassment of UNPROFOR through hijackings of vehicles and thefts of equipment has almost become a daily occurrence, the spokesman continued. Danish peace-keepers were forced out of their jeep at gun-point yesterday to the north-west of Sarajevo, while weapons and ammunition were seized from British peace-keepers on the airport road. Meanwhile in Croatia, three Pakistani UNPROFOR personnel were killed, and five were injured, in a road accident.

The spokesman went on to say that UNPROFOR hoped to resume flights into Sarajevo tomorrow, barring any serious incidents in the meantime. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) expected to resume the humanitarian airlift into the city on Saturday.

* * *

The Security Council today decided on 12 July as the date for the election to fill the impending vacancy on the International Court of Justice. A seat will become vacant on 10 July following the resignation of Judge Sir Robert Yewdall Jennings (United Kingdom).

By unanimously adopting resolution 980 (1995), the Council set the date for its simultaneous meeting with the General Assembly to elect a new member of the Court. Under the Court's Statute, the Assembly and the Council vote independently of one another, and the candidate who obtains an absolute majority in both is elected.

* * *

The Multinational Force in Haiti has said it is continuing to finalize plans for the transition to the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) on 31 March. UNMIH personnel have been arriving steadily, while there are more than 7,100 Multinational Force personnel and some 650 international police monitors in the country. The Force's final report, covering the period 6 to 19 March, was transmitted to the Security Council by the United States in a document dated 20 March.

According to the report, Port-au-Prince enjoyed the safest carnival season in at least eight years thanks to public awareness campaigns and a detailed security plan. There was an increase in the number of murders between 12 and 14 March, but patrols by international police monitors and the

Multinational Force were stepped up in affected areas. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide also made public remarks stressing the importance of the rule of law and reconciliation, and the number of incidents of violence and popular summary "justice" fell significantly.

The Multinational Force has been assisting in the improvement of the Interim Public Security Forces. It has also been working closely with the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) Commission in analyzing human rights and prison reform issues.

* * *

The pardons given to members of the military junta that formerly ruled Argentina have not erased their crimes, but rather shortened their sentences, according to the Director-General for Human Rights of Argentina's Foreign Ministry. Zelmira Regazzoli told the Human Rights Committee at Headquarters yesterday that anyone wishing to institute proceedings concerning violations of human rights during the period of military rule might do so. For 25 years, there had been no enjoyment of political or civil rights, but the Government of Argentina now recognized that all human rights were indivisible and interdependent.

As the Human Rights Committee examined Argentina's report on its compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Ms. Regazzoli said there had been no enjoyment of civil and political rights for 25 years. Now, however, the Government recognized that all human rights were indivisible and interdependent.

* * *

The Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space will hold its thirty-fourth session in Vienna from 27 March to 13 April. The Subcommittee aims to formulate universally acceptable international agreements on a wide range of space-related issues.

At its upcoming session, the Subcommittee will focus on three main issues: whether there is a need to review or revise the principles adopted by the General Assembly in 1992 governing the use of nuclear power sources in outer space in light of subsequent technological developments; definition and delimitation of outer space; and draft principles governing legal issues involved in ensuring that all States share the benefits of space exploration and research.

* *** *

UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1857
23 March 1995

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General expresses concern at reports of Turkish incursions into northern Iraq; urges Turkey to exercise restraint and to ensure safety of civilians in area.

+ Bosnia and Herzegovina calls for thorough review of UNPROFOR mandate and its implementation; says it would accept 30-day extension of mandate in meantime.

+ Fighting between Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb forces intensifies around Tuzla; Croatia deploys troops near border with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ United Nations launches inter-agency appeal for $118 million to fund humanitarian programmes in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

+ United Nations appeals for $23 million to assist persons displaced by emergency situation in Chechnya.

+ Commission on Narcotic Drugs discusses questions of demand reduction and harm reduction.

+ DPI's Dag Hammarskjöld Library makes all United Nations bibliographic information available to public on CD-ROM.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today expressed growing concern at reports of Turkish incursions into Iraqi territory with the stated goal of preventing attacks by Kurdish rebels based in northern Iraq. He strongly urged the Turkish Government to exercise restraint, and to ensure the safety of the civilian population, including refugees, in the area.

The Secretary-General also expressed concern that the continuation of the Turkish offensive might adversely affect United Nations relief operations in northern Iraq.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

* * *

Bosnia and Herzegovina has called for a thorough review of the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), and of its actual implementation, before it is extended beyond 31 March. In a press conference at Headquarters today, the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mohamed Sacirbey, said there was a steadily growing gap between the mandate as provided for by the Security Council and its implementation.

Mr. Sacirbey said many factors should be considered in the review, such as the changes for UNPROFOR in Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the state of the peace process; and the failure of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to recognize its neighbours. Other factors for consideration included the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the failure to lift the siege of Sarajevo; the violation of the exclusion zones around Sarajevo and Gorazde, and continuing incursions into the other safe areas; the persistent onslaught against Bihac; and continuing ethnic cleansing in areas under Serbian occupation.

The Bosnian Government was willing to support a 30-day extension of UNPROFOR's mandate to provide time for the proposed review, he continued. It was also prepared to endorse measures to promote the peace process, improve the humanitarian situation, and secure the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

* * *

Fighting between Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb forces intensified to the north and east of Tuzla today, according to a United Nations spokesman. More than 700 detonations were recorded in the area this morning. However, the Bihac pocket was quiet following a surge in military activity around Velika Kladusa yesterday.

Meanwhile in Croatia, Croatian Serbs were conducting a three-day military exercise in Sector East, and removed 20 tanks, five artillery pieces and three armoured personnel carriers from United Nations collection points. The spokesman said the removal of those heavy weapons, and the deployment of them in the 10-kilometre exclusion zone, violated the cessation of hostilities agreement.

The spokesman went on to say that Croatian troops -- and possibly Bosnian Croat troops -- had deployed eight kilometres inside Sector South, along the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNPROFOR characterized that deployment as "a substantial incursion".

* * *

The United Nations today launched a consolidated inter-agency appeal for $118 million to fund humanitarian programmes in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia between 1 April 1995 and 31 March 1996. The appeal covers the most

urgent needs of refugees, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable segments of the population in the three countries. The money sought will fund activities by United Nations agencies, the International Organization for Migration, and non-governmental organizations.

There are an estimated 890,000 refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan, 380,000 in Armenia, and 280,000 in Georgia. The lack of a durable political solution to the conflicts in the Caucasus has hindered their return. Meanwhile, economic problems have adversely affected living conditions for the general population in the three countries.

* * *

The United Nations has also issued a consolidated inter-agency for almost $23 million for persons displaced by the emergency situation in Chechnya, Russian Federation. The funds will provide emergency assistance to 220,000 displaced persons in the neighbouring republics of Daghestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia for the first six months of 1995. It subsumes the flash appeal for Chechnya which was issued in February as an interim measure.

It is estimated that more than 90 per cent of the displaced persons are living with host families. Most are exposed to extreme over-crowding and poor sanitary conditions, and there are fears of epidemics.

* * *

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which is meeting in Vienna, has been addressing the question of how best to reduce the demand for illicit drugs. Several speakers suggested that "harm reduction" -- measures to alleviate the consequences of drug abuse, such as needle-exchange programmes -- should not be emphasized over demand reduction.

The Netherlands expressed concern that the concept of harm reduction had been misunderstood, while Canada, Australia and the Nordic countries suggested that a clearer definition be developed. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that it would be working with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to update a 13-year-old "Resource Book on Measures to Reduce Illicit Demand for Drugs". There was general agreement on the need to give attention to substances, such as alcohol, tobacco and solvents, which might not be illegal, but whose abuse often led to the abuse of illicit drugs.

The United States outlined its new drug control strategy, which emphasized the need for treatment to go hand in hand with law enforcement. Police and the courts must coordinate their efforts with other agencies, treatment providers, prevention specialists, teachers, religious leaders and the business community.

* * *

(more)

The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has made all the files in the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS) available to the public on a new CD-ROM product, "UNBIS Plus on CD-ROM". Previously, the database was available online only to United Nations offices, permanent missions and selected government agencies. UNBIS Plus provides new and user-friendly access without costly telecommunications charges.

UNBIS Plus is designed to make United Nations information accessible to both specialists and non-specialists, using standard PC and CD-ROM hardware and software. The user interface is in English, but Spanish and French versions are in preparation.

* *** *

UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1858
24 March 1995

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General approves staffing increase in office of Special Representative for Burundi; human rights presence in country to be reinforced.

+ Secretary-General establishes fund to support international police monitoring programme and creation of adequate police force in Haiti; appeals to Member States for contributions.

+ Central African security is categorical imperative, Secretary-General says in message to ministerial meeting in Congo.

+ Commission on Status of Women sets up informal working group to review accreditation of certain non-governmental organizations to 1995 World Conference on Women.

+ Major-General Stanislaw Wozniak of Poland appointed as new Force Commander of UNIFIL.

+ United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish to hold fourth session from 27 March to 12 April.

+ New Zealand reports to Human Rights Committee on settlement of Maori claims under 1840 Treaty.

+ DPI issues Guide to Information at United Nations; publishes Blue Book on United Nations and El Salvador.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has approved a small increase in the size of the office of his Special Representative for Burundi, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, using discretionary funds, according to a United Nations spokesman. The number of professional staff will be increased from three to four, while the number of internationally recruited general service staff will be increased from two to four. Seven more staff members will be recruited locally, bringing the number of local staff to 16.

Meanwhile, the number of United Nations human rights staff in Burundi will be increased sharply from 2 to as many as 35. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jose Ayala Lasso, will be in the country from 29 to 31 March to discuss the actions of the Human Rights Commission in the context of the programme of advisory services and technical assistance.

The spokesman went on to say that those measures reflected the seriousness with which the United Nations viewed the situation in Burundi.

* * *

The Secretary-General has established a voluntary fund to support the international police monitoring programme in Haiti, and to assist with the creation of an adequate police force there. He appealed to all Member States to give immediate and serious consideration to contributing to the fund. He took that action in response to Security Council resolution 975 (1995).

A United Nations spokesman said the security situation in Haiti had improved greatly, but remained fragile. Effective policing and related institution-building efforts were needed to sustain a secure and stable environment for the consolidation of democracy.

* * *

The security of central Africa is a categorical imperative, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a message to the sixth ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, he said peace and security were prerequisites for sustainable development in the region. The meeting took place this week in Brazzaville, Congo.

Africans must draw on their own resources, their ancient civilization, their deeply rooted culture and their ancestral wisdom to take charge of their collective destiny, the Secretary-General said. They must improve measures designed to build confidence between States, including preventive diplomacy. He stressed the need for an African disarmament policy.

* * *

The Commission on the Status of Women has set up an informal working group to review the question of accreditation to the upcoming Fourth World Conference on Women of non-governmental organizations that do not already have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. The Commission, which is meeting at Headquarters through 4 April, is acting as the preparatory body for the Beijing Conference.

On 15 March, the Commission approved ad referendum a list of 1,326 non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the Commission's session and to the Conference, in addition to those which already have consultative status. As a result of questions raised about five non-governmental organizations on the list, as well as non-governmental organizations which

(more)

applied but were not included on the list, the Commission set up the working group to look into the question of accreditation.

The working group has reviewed the application of five non-governmental organizations to which reservations or objections were raised: the Catholics for a Free Choice based in Mexico, Uruguay, Brazil and the United States, and the Armenian Relief Society, based in the United States. The working group recommended their accreditation, which was then confirmed by the Commission.

* * *

The Secretary-General has appointed Major-General Stanislaw Franciszek Wozniak of Poland as Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), with effect from 1 April. Major-General Wozniak is currently Director of the Military International Affairs Department at the Polish Ministry of National Defence. He will succeed Major-General Trond Furuhovde, who served as Force Commander of UNIFIL from 22 February 1993 to 22 February 1995.

* * *

The United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish will hold its fourth session at Headquarters from 27 March to 12 April. The Conference will aim to finalize a draft legal agreement for preventing international conflicts on the high seas. Under the draft negotiating text, countries will be legally bound to conserve and sustainably manage fish stocks and to peacefully settle any disputes arising over fishing on the high seas.

The urgency of the talks has been driven home by the increasing number of conflicts among national fishing fleets. Canada's recent seizure of a Spanish trawler in international waters off its Atlantic coast was the latest incident to draw attention to the problem.

* * *

The recent historic settlement of fishing claims, which provided the Maori people with a major ownership in the New Zealand fishing industry, was a milestone in efforts to settle Maori claims under the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand has told the Human Rights Committee. The Treaty -- recognized as a founding document of the modern State of New Zealand -- was concluded by representatives of the British Crown and Maori Chiefs and Tribes.

Introducing its report on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, New Zealand said another major initiative was the announcement last December of policy proposals for resolving other Maori grievances under the Treaty. The proposals encompassed claims to land and natural resources, and looked to their settlement over the next decade.

* * *

(more)

The Department of Public Information (DPI) has issued a "Guide to Information at the United Nations". The Guide will facilitate public access to the vast array of information produced by the Organization, including publications, briefing papers, video footage and photographs, on virtually every aspect of international life.

The 122-page Guide provides information on subjects from air safety to children's rights, monetary systems to peace-building, and software engineering to waste management. It contains a succinct description of the principal agencies and departments in the United Nations system; their mandate, structure and programmes; the kind of information they produce; and where it can be obtained. The Guide also features a cross-referenced index, which links major United Nations concerns and activities to the principal agencies dealing with them.

The DPI has also announced the publication of "The United Nations and El Salvador, 1990-1995", the fourth volume of the "Blue Books" series. It details the Organization's involvement in the country as a negotiator and peace-keeper, and its role in last year's democratic elections. The mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador will expire on 30 April.

* *** *

UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1859
27 March 1995

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General recommends UNPROFOR be replaced by separate but inter-linked peace-keeping operations in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; says arrangement would respond to wishes of those countries, without compromising United Nations presence in theatre.

+ Secretary-General meets with China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States to discuss deteriorating situation in Burundi.

+ Bosnian Government presses offensive against strategic positions north and east of Tuzla; Bosnian Serbs fire 12 mortar rounds into Gorazde safe area, killing one child.

+ Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks must answer urgent questions of conservation and management, Chairman says; Canada and European Union among speakers today.

+ Commission on Narcotic Drugs concludes thirty-eighth session by adopting 20 resolutions; recommends regulatory measures dealing with money laundering and trade in chemicals used to manufacture illicit drugs.

+ Administrative and Budgetary Committee approves draft resolution asking Secretary-General to proceed with establishment of unified conference-serving facility in Vienna.

+ Human Rights Committee considers special report on situation in Haiti; experts question power of civilian institutions to seek redress for victims.

+ Conference on Disarmament agrees to establish ad hoc committee to negotiate treaty banning production of fissile material.

* * *

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) be replaced by three separate but inter-linked peace-keeping operations. In a report to the Security Council dated 22 March, he proposed that United Nations Peace Forces One (UNPF-1), Two (UNPF-2) and Three (UNPF-3) be established in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia respectively. That arrangement would respond to the wishes of the three countries, without compromising the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of an integrated United Nations peace-keeping presence in the theatre.

Each of the three operations would be headed by a civilian chief of mission at the level of Assistant Secretary-General, and would have its own military commander, the Secretary-General continued. However, the Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia would have overall command and control. The theatre headquarters -- United Nations Peace Forces headquarters (UNPF-HQ) -- would be in Zagreb, where administrative, logistical and public information responsibilities would be coordinated.

The Secretary-General recommended the negotiation of a new mandate and functions for UNPF-1, which would be significantly smaller than the existing UNPROFOR presence in Croatia. UNPF-1 would support implementation of the cease-fire agreement of 29 March 1994, the economic agreement of 2 December 1994, and relevant elements of the existing United Nations peace-keeping plan for Croatia. Its mandate would extend until 30 November. UNPF-2 and UNPF-3 would have the same responsibilities and composition as UNPROFOR had at present in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

* * *

The Secretary-General met this morning with the Permanent Representatives of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States to discuss the situation in Burundi. A United Nations spokesman said the situation had deteriorated considerably in recent days, although a measure of calm had returned on Sunday evening. Violence had claimed from 200 to 500 lives, according to unconfirmed reports, and there had been an exodus of people from Bujumbura.

The spokesman went on to say that the Secretary-General was very concerned about those developments, noting that this morning's meeting was at his request.

* * *

Fighting continued today to the north and east of Tuzla as the Bosnian Government pressed its offensive against strategic positions held by the Bosnian Serbs, according to a United Nations spokesman. On Saturday, Bosnian Serb forces fired 12 mortar rounds into the Gorazde safe area, killing a child and injuring at least six civilians. A similar number of mortar rounds landed in East Mostar at around the same time, but UNPROFOR was unable to establish responsibility for that attack.

(more)

The spokesman said UNPROFOR had not called for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air support as a result of Saturday's incidents. However, he stressed that the Force would not hesitate to call for such support when justified, on a case-by-case basis, and bearing in mind the ultimate objective of protecting civilians and not putting any more lives at risk.

* * *

The international community expects answers to the urgent problems of conservation and management facing the world's fisheries, the Chairman of the Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks said today. Opening the Conference's session, Satya Nandan (Fiji) said global solutions must be found to bring order to the oceans and to promote cooperation among States. Recent incidents involving fishing vessels on the high seas underscored the urgency of the task ahead, but must not become an impediment to the negotiations.

Canada's Minister for Fisheries, Brian Tobin, said that without effective high-seas enforcement, the international community would have done nothing to eliminate the destruction caused by overfishing. The conditions of the world's fisheries had worsened in the last year, yet some States continued to fish irresponsibly, fishing whatever, wherever and however they could.

The Commissioner for Fisheries of the European Community, Emma Bonino, said effective conservation could only be achieved if measures taken on the high seas were compatible with those taken within national waters. Due regard must be taken of the interests, rights and obligations of all States concerned. If States asserted unilateral jurisdiction on the high seas, it would seriously undermine the legal regime established by the Law of the Sea Convention.

* * *

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs has concluded its thirty-eighth session in Vienna by adopting 20 resolutions without a vote. One resolution on money laundering urged States to require or encourage financial institutions to report suspicious transactions. It also encouraged them to set up national organizations to collect, review and analyze data on such transactions, with a view to sharing information with competent authorities.

Another resolution dealt with the international trade in precursors and chemicals used to manufacture illicit drugs. It specified the information that should be shared by countries exporting or importing psychotropic substances, including precursors of amphetamines and LSD. It called on those countries to investigate suspicious transactions and to cooperate with international authorities in stopping shipments when there was evidence of diversion into illegal channels.

The Commission also approved a revised budget of over $190 million for the International Drug Control Programme for the 1994-1995 biennium, and took note of an outline for a $151-million budget for 1996-1997. It also called on States to substantially increase their contributions to the fund for the Programme.

* * *

(more)

The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) has approved a draft resolution asking the Secretary-General to proceed with the establishment of a unified conference-serving facility in Vienna. That action would be taken within existing resources, taking into account increased income from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) for services provided by the United Nations.

By the draft, the General Assembly would note that the proposed single facility would result in an estimated net additional cost of almost $325,000. The Secretary-General would be requested to examine the feasibility of contracting out elements of conference services at Headquarters and at all duty stations in order to achieve further cost efficiency in future programme budgets.

* * *

Experts of the Human Rights Committee this morning called into question the power of civilian institutions in Haiti to seek redress for victims of human rights abuses committed during the period of military rule. They cited, in particular, institutions such as the judiciary and the newly established National Commission on Truth and Justice, and expressed concern about victims of sexual crimes.

Carole Denerville, Secretary of State for Justice for Haiti, introduced her country's report on the human rights situation following the restoration of constitutional government. She said the National Commission had been set up to make public the whole truth about human rights violations in order to ensure redress for the victims. It would address individual and institutional responsibility for those crimes, and develop an understanding of their historical causes.

While some members called for tolerance in consideration of the special circumstances in Haiti, others expressed great disappointment over the report's failure to describe the actual situation in the country. Members stressed that the Committee needed to know what problems were being faced by the Government and people of Haiti and what was being done to address them. Of specific concern were the problems of the police, the judiciary and election planning.

* * *

The Conference on Disarmament has agreed to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It took that action in Geneva on Friday, by adopting a report by Special Coordinator Gerald Shannon (Canada).

The Special Coordinator stated that the Conference could establish the ad hoc committee under a mandate based on General Assembly resolution 48/75L. Delegations had agreed during consultations that the mandate did not preclude consideration of the appropriate scope of the treaty, future and past production, and the management of fissile material.

* *** *

UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1860
28 March 1995

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General to inspect United Nations missions in Haiti, El Salvador and Guatemala, and pay official visit to Honduras; will preside over transfer of command from Multinational Force to UNMIH.

+ UNHCR to mark one-thousandth day of humanitarian airlift to Sarajevo on Wednesday.

+ Government of Guatemala and URNG, meeting in Mexico City, finalize agreement on identity and rights of indigenous peoples.

+ Administrative and Budgetary Committee is told UNMIH costs should not exceed $258 million for period 1 February to 31 December.

+ Haitian Government tells Human Rights Committee it will need funding and international assistance to deal with inherited problems.

+ FAO says Rwanda's farmers are harvesting first crops since civil war, but food situation remains precarious.

+ Yvonne Terlingen appointed as Coordinator of Victims and Witnesses Unit of International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will leave Headquarters on Thursday for a four-day visit to the Caribbean and Central America. He will inspect the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador, and the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA), and will pay an official visit to Honduras.

Together with the Presidents of Haiti and the United States, the Secretary-General will preside over the ceremonies of the transfer of command from the Multinational Force to UNMIH. During his visit to Honduras, at the

(more)

For information media—not an official record

invitation of President Carlos Reina, he will thank the country for its role in Central America and its contributions to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and UNMIH.

In El Salvador, the Secretary-General will review progress achieved since 1991, when ONUSAL was first deployed. The Mission will complete its mandate on 30 April. In Guatemala, in conjunction with his visit to MINUGUA, he will meet with President De Leon Carpio, Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchu and leaders of the National Assembly of Civil Society.

* * *

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will mark the one-thousandth day of its humanitarian airlift to Sarajevo tomorrow. The airlift -- the longest such operation in history -- began on 3 July 1992. It has since delivered more than 150,000 metric tons of life-saving food, medical supplies and other aid to more than 440,000 people in and around the Bosnian capital.

"Despite the success of this air bridge in keeping people alive, there is nothing UNHCR -- and the residents of Sarajevo -- would like better than to see the Sarajevo airlift come to a final, peaceful end," High Commissioner Sadako Ogata said. "The fact that this operation has had to continue for 1,000 days is nothing to celebrate. But we certainly must pay tribute to the hundreds of brave fliers and ground and support staff who have kept this vital lifeline open. They have saved countless lives."

* * *

The Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), meeting in Mexico City, have finalized an agreement on "identity and rights of indigenous peoples". According to the United Nations moderator of the talks between the parties, the agreement will be signed at a formal meeting in the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 31 March.

On the same date, a delegation of the Assembly of Civil Society will submit to the parties the consensus document on the next issue for negotiation, entitled "Socio-economic aspects and agrarian situation".

* * *

The costs for the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) for the period 1 February to 31 December should not exceed $258 million, the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) was told today. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), C.S.M. Mselle, said that amount would include some $152 million gross for the period from 1 February to 31 July, and $106 million for 1 August to 31 December.

Yesterday, the Fifth Committee said that an additional appropriation of $9.4 million would be required should the General Assembly renew the mandate of the United Nations Human Rights Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA)

(more)

for another six months from 1 April. An additional appropriation of $769,000 would be required for staff assessment, to be offset by the same amount under the income section.

Furthermore, should the Assembly extend MINUGUA's mandate beyond 30 September, the Secretary-General should be authorized to commit up to $4.7 million under section 4 (peace-keeping operations and special missions) of the 1994-1995 programme budget for activities in the period 1 October to 31 December.

* * *

The Haitian Government will need funding and international assistance if it is to deal with the tremendous problems it has inherited, Carole Denerville, Haiti's Secretary of State for Justice told the Human Rights Committee yesterday. "Things must change in the country", she said, as the Committee concluded its consideration of Haiti's special report on its compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

She called particular attention to the lack of security in Haiti. Disarmament had not been realized, and funding was needed for a good, effective police force. There was also concern about the climate within which the forthcoming elections would be held.

* * *

Rwandese farmers are harvesting their first food crops since their country was devastated by a genocidal civil war last year, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). However, the food situation remains precarious, with cereal-equivalent production down 40 per cent from previous years. A joint FAO/World Food Programme (WFP) assessment mission has estimated Rwanda's food aid requirements for the first six months of 1995 at 150,000 tons of cereals and pulses.

The Government of Rwanda has begun to rebuild the country's agricultural infrastructure with assistance from the FAO and logistical support from 25 other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. Full rehabilitation of Rwanda's agriculture, forests, fisheries and livestock will take years and will be expensive. The FAO has appealed for more than $18.5 million to keep the recovery on course, but has so far only received pledges totaling $11.4 million.

* * *

The Registrar of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia today announced the appointment of Yvonne Terlingen as Coordinator of the Victims and Witnesses Unit. Prior to her new position, Mrs. Terlingen served as Researcher for South-Asia in the London-based International Secretariat of Amnesty International.

(more)

The Victims and Witnesses Unit will coordinate the provision of care, protection and support to victims and witnesses heard by the Tribunal. It will seek to ensure that they can testify with dignity, and in conditions of safety and security. The Unit will have a staff of four, and will work for witnesses for the prosecution as well as for the defence.

* *** *

UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1861
29 March 1995

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council expresses deep concern about escalation of violence in Burundi and deplores ethnic killings; calls on all parties to fully respect Convention of Government.

+ Special Representative Akashi voices concern about situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina; warns current violence could lead to new war, with incalculable consequences for whole region.

+ Secretary-General hails ONUSAL's accomplishments, but says key parts of El Salvador peace accords remain to be fulfilled; United Nations should maintain small team in country to verify compliance and provide good offices.

+ Secretary-General to convene International Meeting on Mine Clearance in Geneva from 5 to 7 July.

+ Bold conservation proposals are needed as time runs out for world's fisheries, Greenpeace tells Conference on Fish Stocks.

+ UNHCR says influx of displaced people from Chechnya to Dagestan has increased sharply in past week; appeals for donations of tents as soon as possible.

+ WFP to provide food aid to destitute Palestinians in Gaza and Jericho; says expected socio-economic improvements since Israel-PLO peace accords have not materialized.

+ Preparatory Committee for United Nations Fiftieth Anniversary discusses arrangements for special commemorative meeting in October.

+ Nine draft resolutions introduced in Commission on Status of Women.

+ Human Rights Committee elects third Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur; discusses draft general comment on article 25 of International Covenant on Civil Rights.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

* * *

The Security Council today expressed deep concern about the escalation of violence in Burundi. In a statement read out by its President, Li Zhaoxing (China), the Council condemned the murders of the Minister of Energy and Mines and of the former Mayor of Bujumbura by extremists, and deplored the ensuing ethnic killings of many people. It also condemned the activities of the extremist elements who tried to destabilize the country and threaten the whole region, and encouraged all States to take measures to prevent them from travelling abroad and receiving any kind of support.

The Council reaffirmed its support for the Convention of Government of 10 September, which provided an institutional framework for national reconciliation. It called on all political parties, military forces and elements of civil society to fully respect and implement it in a spirit of dialogue, moderation and compromise. The Council underlined the urgency of organizing a national debate with the participation of all elements of the nation with a view to consolidating national reconciliation and restoring democracy. It invited the Secretary-General to help the various political parties and elements of civil society to initiate that comprehensive consultation.

The Council warned that those who committed crimes against humanity were individually responsible for them, and would be brought to justice. It specifically warned that if acts of genocide were committed in Burundi, it would consider taking appropriate measures to bring to justice under international law those who might have committed such acts.

* * *

Special Representative Yasushi Akashi has said the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a cause of great concern. In a statement issued today, he noted that the current Cessation of Hostilities Agreement would expire in little more than a month. The parties to the conflict, who had freely entered into that Agreement, appeared determined to plunge the country into a new war, with incalculable consequences for the region as a whole.

The Bosnian Government's recent military offensives were clear breaches of the Cease-fire and Cessation of Hostilities Agreements, Mr. Akashi continued. Retaliatory actions by the Bosnian Serbs were also unjustified. The increasing difficulties facing the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), and the lack of cooperation by all sides -- especially the Government side -- underscored the need for an immediate return to the peace process.

Mr. Akashi urgently called on all the parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to seriously reflect on the grave and far-reaching consequences of their current actions. He urged them to desist from acts of provocation, offensives

(more)

and counter-offensives, and to respect all agreements entered into. Self-restraint was particularly needed now, as renewed diplomatic efforts were underway to achieve a final peace settlement.

* * *

The United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) helped the Salvadorians take giant strides away from a violent and closed society towards a democratic order, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. However, in a report dated 24 March, he said some commitments entered into by the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) in the peace accords remained to be fulfilled. Unfortunately, those commitments were so important that the irreversibility of the peace process as a whole would be called into question as long as that was the case.

ONUSAL's mandate will expire on 30 April, 45 months after the opening of a pioneering human rights mission and 39 months after the formal cease-fire that accompanied full deployment. In his report, the Secretary-General said he had considered recommending that the Mission be extended beyond that date. However, members of the Security Council had indicated that the time had come to bring it to a close. He proposed that the United Nations maintain a small team of professionals, with support staff, in El Salvador to verify compliance with pending aspects of the peace accords and to provide good offices.

The Secretary-General stressed that Salvadorian institutions, strengthened and reformed pursuant to the peace accords, would now have to assume their responsibilities in full. He expressed the hope that legislative action would be rapidly taken to consolidate those institutions. The United Nations would be ready to lend assistance in that regard.

* * *

The Secretary-General has decided to convene an International Meeting on Mine Clearance in Geneva from 5 to 7 July. The meeting will aim to improve international coordination of assistance in mine clearance, to heighten awareness of the problem of uncleared mines, and to generate the resources needed to expand United Nations efforts in this field. It is being convened in response to a request made by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

In a report on assistance in mine clearance, the Secretary-General points out that there are over 100 million land mines in 64 affected countries. As many as 5 million more are being laid each year. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, more than 800 people are killed each month by land mines and thousands more are maimed. The financial cost of clearing the world of the menace is estimated at more than $30 billion.

(more)

* * *

Bold proposals on conservation of depleted fish stocks are needed as time is running out for the world's fisheries, Greenpeace told the Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks yesterday. As the Conference concluded its general debate on a draft agreement on the sustainable use and management of fish stocks, Greenpeace called for respect for the rights of small-scale fisheries and indigenous workers in the fishing industry. The precautionary approach in management of fish stocks should be mandatory, and there should be multilateral mechanisms for effective monitoring, control and surveillance of high-seas fisheries.

The 48-article draft agreement lays out general principles to guide coastal and distant-water-fishing States in fulfilling their conservation and management duties under the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention. Those duties include measures to eliminate overfishing and ensure long-term sustainability of stocks.

Other speakers stressed the importance of cooperation between coastal States and distant-water-fishing States through bilateral agreements. Mexico said the draft agreement should be acceptable to both distant-water States and coastal States and should include provisions on the involvement of regional fisheries agencies and organizations in conservation and management measures.

* * *

The influx of displaced people from war-torn Chechnya to neighbouring Dagestan has increased sharply over the past week, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). There have been reports that at least 30,000 people have fled fighting and continuous heavy shelling in the Gudermez-Shali region.

Dagestan has already been struggling to cope with more than 87,000 displaced Chechens, and all available public accommodation centres are full. The authorities have called for the establishment of tent camps, and UNHCR has appealed to donors to provide tents as soon as possible.

* * *

The World Food Programme (WFP) has announced that it will provide food aid to 36,000 of the most destitute Palestinians in Gaza and Jericho. It will provide 1,835 metric tons of wheatflour, pulses and sugar to cover basic needs for six months, at an estimated cost of $900,000.

Major improvements in the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinians and a massive influx of foreign aid were expected after the peace accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). However, according to the WFP, those expectations were not met. Out of a total of $650 million pledged in external aid for 1994, only $140 million has been received.

(more)

* * *

The Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations has decided that the special commemorative meeting taking place at Headquarters from 22 to 24 October will be held in six sessions, or "frames".

The Committee also decided not to have a linear, continuous speakers' list for the meeting. Instead, it favoured a frame-by-frame approach, by which each of the six sessions would hear from speakers at various levels of national office.

A number of representatives supported the proposal that lots be drawn to determine which country would speak at each meeting. Some proposed a system combining the lottery with the expression of a slot preference by each delegation.

* * *

The Secretary-General would be requested to see to the preparation of a long-term joint work plan on the human rights of women for the Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women, under a draft resolution introduced in the Commission on the Status of Women. The draft, introduced by Australia and supported by 81 co-sponsors, was one of nine presented to the Commission yesterday.

Another draft resolution would have the Economic and Social Council decide that the Commission should establish a working group to elaborate a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The optional protocol would introduce the right of individuals to petition in cases of violations of women's human rights.

* * *

The Human Rights Committee has elected Prafullachandra Natwarlal Bhagwati, former Attorney-General and expert from India, as its third Vice-Chairman. It also agreed that Christine Chanet, expert from France, who is absent from the current session owing to illness, will be elected as Rapporteur upon her return.

Also yesterday, the Committee continued its consideration of a draft general comment on article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It provisionally approved the first two paragraphs of the draft, which describe the overall scope of Article 25 and its place in the Covenant. The article protects the right to take part in public affairs, to vote or be elected, and to have access to public service.

* *** *

UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1862
30 March 1995

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General arrives in Haiti at start of four-day visit to Caribbean and Central America; will preside over transfer of command from Multinational Force to UNMIH tomorrow.

+ United Nations should proceed with preparations for deployment of infantry units in Angola, Secretary-General tells Security Council.

+ Security Council decides to maintain sanctions regime against Libya; France, United Kingdom and United States stress commitment to comprehensive enforcement.

+ Secretary-General says United Nations did not achieve all goals in Somalia, but can claim some major accomplishments; Organization to maintain political presence in area to provide good offices.

+ Commission on Status of Women approves texts on rape of women in former Yugoslavia, status of women in Secretariat, and rights of migrant workers.

+ Administrative and Budgetary Committee approves financing of Haiti, Tajikistan and Iraq-Kuwait peace-keeping missions.

+ Spain institutes proceedings against Canada in International Court of Justice in connection with current fishing dispute.

+ Human Rights Committee considers initial report of United States on implementation of Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

+ FAO and Haiti sign agreement on technical and legal assistance for agrarian reform.

+ Economic Commission for Europe to hold fiftieth annual session in Geneva from 3 to 11 April.

* * *

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali arrived in Port-au-Prince today, beginning a four-day visit to the Caribbean and Central America. Tomorrow, together with the Presidents of Haiti and the United States, he will preside over ceremonies marking the transfer of command from the Multinational Force to the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH).

Meanwhile, Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi expressed shock and indignation at the assassination of Mireille Durochar-Bertin, a Haitian lawyer, and of a person accompanying her. He said that the odious crime must not remain unpunished, and that the Haitian authorities could count on the full cooperation of UNMIH.

"Those who want to perpetuate the reign of violence and prevent Haiti from moving forward on the path to democracy and progress are condemned in advance", Mr. Brahimi said. He expressed confidence that the Haitian people would not react to provocations, and pledged that the international community would support them fully in their work to transform Haiti.

* * *

It would be in the best interest of the Angolan peace process to proceed with preparations for the deployment of infantry units of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), according to the Secretary-General. In a letter to the President of the Security Council dated 28 March, he said the conditions stipulated in Council resolution 976 (1995) had not been fully met. However, some progress had recently been made in the effective cessation of hostilities, the disengagement of troops, the establishment of verification mechanisms, the modalities for integration of military forces, and other essential tasks.

It was becoming increasingly necessary to assist the Angolan parties in overcoming their mutual distrust and to give the peace process additional impetus, the Secretary-General continued. It was also important to avoid dangerous delays in the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol which might destabilize the situation on the ground. Preparations for the deployment of United Nations troops were already behind the original schedule. If the parties did not comply without delay with their commitments under the Protocol and provide indispensable logistic support to UNAVEM III, it would not be possible to ensure that the deployment began in May.

The Secretary-General stressed that time was short and that the opportunities created by the Lusaka Protocol and resolution 976 (1995) must not be lost. United Nations efforts must be matched by an unambiguous political will and concrete action by the Angolan parties. In the meantime, the Organization would continue with all necessary logistical preparation for UNAVEM III.

* * *

The President of the Security Council, Li Zhaoxing (China), today said that no agreement had been reached on the issue of sanctions against Libya.

(more)

He made that comment to correspondents after the Council's ninth review of the sanctions regime imposed by resolution 748 (1992).

Meanwhile, France, the United Kingdom and the United States said they were committed to full and comprehensive enforcement of the sanctions against Libya. In a statement issued at Headquarters, they reaffirmed their common determination to bring to justice those responsible for the bombings of Pan Am flight 103 and UTA flight 772. They also reaffirmed that Libya must ensure the appearance of the two Lockerbie suspects in the United Kingdom or United States, where they would receive a fair trial.

* * *

While the United Nations did not achieve all its objectives in Somalia, it could claim some major accomplishments, including the ending of starvation in the country, the Secretary-General said in a report dated 28 March. The Organization also afforded the Somali parties every opportunity for national reconciliation and reconstruction. If the political will to achieve a durable compromise was lacking, the responsibility lay with the Somali leadership.

The United Nations experience in Somalia confirmed that the responsibility for political compromise and national reconciliation must be borne by the leaders and people concerned, the Secretary-General continued. "The international community can only facilitate, prod, encourage and assist. It can neither impose peace nor coerce unwilling parties into accepting it", he said.

The Secretary-General stressed that the United Nations was not abandoning Somalia. There was a vital link between humanitarian assistance and assistance in achieving national reconciliation. With that in mind, he would continue to make his good offices available to the Somali parties and would maintain a political presence in the area for that purpose. The size and mandate of that presence would depend on whether the Somali factions wanted the Organization to play a facilitating or mediating role and were ready to cooperate with it. Meanwhile the Special Representative for Somalia would remain in Nairobi, pending further instructions, to monitor the situation and coordinate United Nations humanitarian activities in Somalia.

* * *

The Commission on the Status of Women has adopted a resolution condemning the continuing abhorrent practice of rape and abuse of women and children in the areas of armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia. It took that action yesterday, following a roll-call vote on one preambular paragraph.

Acting on the request of the Russian Federation, the Commission voted 35 in favour to 1 against, with 5 abstentions, to retain preambular paragraph 8. In that paragraph, the Commission expressed its conviction that the heinous practice of rape and abuse of women constituted a deliberate weapon of war in fulfilling the policy of "ethnic cleansing" carried out by Serb forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(more)

The Commission also approved a resolution by which the Economic and Social Council would urge the Secretary-General to implement fully the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000). The Council would also urge him to accord greater priority to recruiting and promoting women in posts, subject to geographical distribution. The Secretary-General would also be requested to further develop policy measures aimed at preventing sexual harassment in the Secretariat.

By another text adopted yesterday, the Commission encouraged Member States to ensure the protection of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women migrant workers. States were urged to implement measures to eradicate all forms of racism and xenophobia, and to promote education on human rights and acceptance of cultural diversity.

* * *

The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) has approved a draft resolution by which the General Assembly would appropriate almost $152 million to maintain the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) from 1 February to 31 July 1995. By that text, the Assembly would appropriate $6 million for the period 1 August 1994 to 31 January 1995 and $44,000 for the period 1 to 31ÑJulyÑ1994.

The Committee also approved a draft resolution on the financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT). By that text, the Assembly would appropriate $10 million for the period 27 April 1995 to 30 June 1996, subject to the decision of the Security Council to extend the Mission's mandate. It would also appropriate over $3 million for the period 16 December 1994 to 26 April 1995.

Also yesterday, the Committee recommended that the Assembly provisionally approve $12 million to maintain the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) from 1 April to 30 June, should the Security Council extend it.

* * *

Spain has instituted proceedings against Canada in the International Court of Justice in connection with the fishing dispute between the two countries. The dispute relates to the amended Canadian Coastal Fisheries Protection Act, as well as to certain measures taken on the basis of that legislation, particularly the boarding of a Spanish fishing boat on the high seas on 9 March.

Spain's application to the Court alleges the violation of various principles and norms of international law. It states that there is a dispute between Spain and Canada which, going beyond the framework of fishing, seriously affects the very principle of the freedom of the high seas, and

(more)

implies a serious infringement of Spain's sovereign rights.

* * *

The Human Rights Committee yesterday considered the initial report of the United States on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Introducing the report, John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, said the United States was "a work in progress". It did not shrink from such problems as crime, drugs, poverty and discrimination. He added that his country's ratification of the Covenant in 1992 was the beginning, not the end, of a process of constructive dialogue with the Committee.

Expert members of the Committee expressed concern about the application of the death penalty in the United States to minors of sixteen years of age and above. They also posed questions relating to such matters as the status and treatment of Native Americans, laws on the detention of "excludable aliens" pending their deportation, and minimum standards for the humane treatment of prisoners.

* * *

The President of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Jacques Diouf, have signed an agreement on assistance for agrarian reform. The FAO confirmed its readiness to supply technical and legal assistance to Haiti, while the Haitian Government underscored its commitment to the full revision of land-tenure systems.

Under its technical cooperation programme, the FAO will assist with the preparation of land-tenure legislation and with the establishment of institutions to implement it. It will also help to establish a land survey and registration system, and will assist in the search for international financing for the planned activities.

* * *

The 55-member Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) will hold its fiftieth annual session in Geneva from 3 to 11 April. Among the issues to be discussed are assistance to European countries with economies in transition and their integration into the European and global economy. A high-level round table will discuss the subject "Promoting the expansion of trade of the countries in transition as an important function of the integration with the European and global economy".

Created in 1947, the ECE was the first of five regional commissions of the United Nations. Within its interdisciplinary work programme, emphasis is laid on the environment, transport, statistics, trade facilitation and economic analysis. Sustainable development is the guiding principle of all ECE activities.

* *** *

3872P

UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1863
31 March 1995

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ As United Nations takes over from Multinational Force in Haiti, Secretary-General says Haitian people must take charge of their own destiny; urges international community to continue to support development and democracy through revitalization of multilateral ideal.

+ Security Council, in three resolutions, replaces UNPROFOR with separate but inter-linked peace-keeping operations in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

+ General Assembly extends MINUGUA mandate for six months; calls on Government of Guatemala and URNG to comply fully with commitments under Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights.

+ Secretary-General voices concerned about escalation of hostilities along Israeli-Lebanese border; urges parties to cease hostilities and to refrain from attacking civilian targets.

+ UNHCR expresses alarm at outflow of Rwandese refugees from camps in northern Burundi; calls on governments in region to respect principle of safe asylum.

+ ICRC expresses concern about appalling conditions in Rwanda's prisons; appeals to Government and international community to set up new places of detention to alleviate overcrowding.

+ Vienna Unit of Department for Development Support and Management Services launches two assistance projects for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, together with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti and President Bill Clinton of the United States, today presided over ceremonies marking the transfer of command from the Multinational Force to the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). In a

(more)

For information media—not an official record

statement, the Secretary-General stressed that the people of Haiti must maintain their commitment to rebuild their society, while Member States must continue to support the revitalization of the multilateral ideal.

Haiti was on the path to justice and reconciliation based on mutual respect, the Secretary-General said. The next great steps would be the upcoming legislative, local and presidential elections. The international community would assist in maintaining security, in reinforcing institutions and in promoting economic growth. However, it was up to the Haitian people to take charge of their own destiny.

At a luncheon this afternoon, the Secretary-General thanked President Clinton for the critical role his country had played in leading the Multinational Force. The United States, along with the international community, must remain involved in Haiti for the sake of democracy and development. At a dinner last night, President Aristide congratulated the Secretary-General on the achievements of the Multinational Force and UNMIH, and expressed confidence in the future. The Secretary-General highlighted the importance of the upcoming elections and the need for economic progress in Haiti.

The Force Commander of UNMIH is Major-General Joseph Kinzer of the United States. The Force has a troop strength of almost 5,800, and a headquarters staff of 172. More than 800 civilian police have arrived in Haiti, out of an authorized strength of 900.

* * *

The Security Council today decided to replace the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) with separate but inter-li ed peace-keeping operations in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Council took that action by adopting three resolutions unanimously, in which it approved the arrangements recommended in the Secretary-General's report of 22 March.

Resolution 981 (1995) established the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) until 30 November 1995. UNCRO will facilitate implementation of the Cease-Fire Agreement of 29 March 1994, the Economic Agreement of 2 December 1994, and relevant elements of the United Nations peace-keeping plan for Croatia. It will assist in controlling the crossing of military personnel and equipment over Croatia's international borders with Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

UNCRO will also facilitate the delivery of international humanitarian assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina through Croatian territory. It will be an interim arrangement to create conditions for a negotiated settlement consistent with Croatia's territorial integrity, and which guarantees the security and rights of all communities living in a particular area of Croatia.

(more)

By resolution 982 (1995), the Council extended UNPROFOR's mandate in Bosnia and Herzegovina until 30 November 1995. It authorized the Secretary-General to redeploy all UNPROFOR personnel and assets from Croatia before 30 June, with the exception of those whose continued presence was required for UNCRO. UNPROFOR will retain its support structures and headquarters in Croatia. The Council reiterated the importance of compliance with the agreements between the Bosnian parties on a cease-fire and a cessation of hostilities. It called on the parties to extend those agreements beyond 30 April, and to negotiate an overall peace settlement using the Contact Group's peace plan as a starting point.

Finally, by resolution 983 (1995), the Council decided that UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia would be known as the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). The new Force will have the same responsibilities and composition as UNPROFOR had in the country, with a mandate until 30 November 1995.

* * *

The General Assembly today extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) for another six months. It also called on the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) to follow the Mission's recommendations and to comply fully with their commitments under the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights.

The Assembly reiterated the great importance of the early conclusion of the agreement on a firm and lasting peace in Guatemala. It urged the parties to make good on their commitment to give new momentum to the negotiating process.

Meanwhile, at a meeting in Mexico City, the Guatemalan Government and the URNG today signed an agreement on the identity and rights of indigenous people. The Secretary-General welcomed that encouraging development, and expressed the hope that the parties would build on it in working for a firm and lasting peace.

* * *

The Secretary-General today said he was deeply concerned about the recent escalation of hostilities along the Israeli-Lebanese border, which had resulted in a number of civilian casualties on both sides. He urged all parties to cease hostilities and, in particular, to refrain from attacking civilian targets.

* * *

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, today expressed alarm at the outflow of some 45,000 Rwandese refugees from their camps in northern Burundi. She called on all governments in the region to respect the principle of safe asylum.

(more)

The Rwandese refugees, frightened by deteriorating security conditions, began leaving the camps earlier in the week and headed towards the Tanzanian border. Magara camp, which previously sheltered some 40,000 people, was virtually abandoned. Meanwhile, large numbers of refugees -- mostly of Hutu origin -- left camps at Ruvumu, Majuri and Ntamba. Prior to those movements, the UNHCR had been sheltering some 200,000 Rwandese refugees in northern Burundi.

* * *

The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Cornelio Sommaruga, today expressed serious concern about the "appalling" conditions in Rwanda's prisons. He said that overcrowding had led to a steady deterioration in those conditions, and that the situation was become more critical every day. The prison population was growing by 1,500 every week, and some institutions now housed up to four inmates per square metre of floor space.

The ICRC President appealed to the Government of Rwanda and to the international community to set up new places of detention in order to alleviate the overcrowding. The rule of law and a functioning judicial system must be restored. He also called on all States parties to the Geneva Conventions to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law, and urged them to do everything possible to resolve the situation.

* * *

The Reconstruction and Development Unit of the Department for Development Support and Management Services has launched a training programme for the staff of the Directorate in charge of restoring essential services to Sarajevo. It has also begun assisting the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in drawing up an economic recovery plan. The Vienna-based Unit has taken those actions in order to create a more efficient and effective plan for the reconstruction of the Bosnian capital.

Under the training programme, personnel from the Sarajevo Directorate are being instructed in the formulation of projects for submission to donors and the preparation of technical, financial and progress reports. Computers will be provided to establish a databank of viable projects. The programme is financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The second project addresses the extensive destruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina's infrastructure and the almost complete disruption of its economy. Under that project, the Government, in consultation with the United Nations and other donors, is developing a priority programme for the resumption of essential services and a framework for short- and long-term recovery.

* *** *